

## Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam (Sunny Series in Islam) (Sunny Series, Islam)

By Alexander D. Knysh


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This book examines the fierce theological controversy over the great Muslim mystical thinker Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1242). Even during his lifetime, Ibn 'Arabi's conformity with the letter of the Muslim dogma was called into doubt by many scholars who were suspicious of the monistic (unitive) tendencies of his metaphysical teaching, of his claims to be the Prophet's successor and restorer of the true meaning of the Islamic revelation, and of his allegorical interpretation of the Qur'an. In thoroughly analyzing the heated debates around Ibn 'Arabi's ideas throughout the three centuries following his death, this study brings out discursive strategies and arguments employed by the polemicists, the hidden agendas they pursued, and the reasons for the striking longevity of the issue in Islamic literature up to the present day. On the theoretical level, this book reassesses the validity of such common dichotomies as orthodoxy versus heresy, mainstream versus mystical interpretations of Islam, and communalism versus individualism as well as other issues related to the history of Islamic thought.

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### Review

"Knysh has looked at exactly who were the supporters and opponents of Ibn 'Arabi for several centuries after his death, where they were getting their information, why they should have taken the position they took, and so forth. The author brings together a lot of tidbits in the secondary literature that people have not connected, and he does so with careful attention to the primary texts." -- William C. Chittick, author of *The Self Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn 'Arabi's Cosmology*

### About the Author

Alexander D. Knysh is The Sharjah Professor of Islamic Studies, Department of Arabic and Middle East Studies, University of Exeter, United Kingdom.

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